

## ***Low Inference Data***

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### ***Purpose***

Throughout the NYC Leadership Academy's programs, many activities and mini lessons are grounded in the idea of low-inference data which represent data and experiences we can see and hear. One activity we use in APP that introduces participants to the idea and importance of collecting low-inference data for future decision-making is the *Meet the Staff* activity of the simulated school. It is an opportunity for participants to explore how to make sense of the data around us which comes to us in many ways and forms. The purpose is to help participants hone the skills of observation with the ultimate purpose of improving student performance.

### ***Suggested Time***

30 minutes

### ***Description/Activity Steps***

Example a mini-lesson on low-inference data that the facilitator delivers:

Low inference data is observable data and experiences to which one ultimately adds meaning, makes assumptions, draws conclusions, adopts beliefs, and takes actions

People frequently take action and make decisions about a school environment without returning to the observable data. A focus on low inference data – what one sees and hears – disciplines participants in the examination of facts that are rooted in what is actually going on in the school and not in their assumptions or inferences. Low-inference descriptions should also clearly indicate who does the actions; it should employ the active voice as opposed to the passive.

High-inference data, in contrast, is data to which one has added judgments or assumptions. High-inference data is described with subjective adjectives or qualifying language. Often, one may describe data with a non-judgmental tone, but use a seemingly innocuous or positive-sounding word to judge what they have seen (e.g., “The teacher is organized”). This is not low-inference because the observer has *drawn a conclusion* that the teacher's files are organized without detailing what s/he has seen that indicates this. A low-inference example is, “On a steel table in the front of the room, the teacher placed a green folder for homework from Class 01, a red folder for Class 02, and a blue folder for Class 03. The teacher labels each class's homework in these respective colors on the whiteboard in the front of the classroom.”

Chart with participants examples of low- and high-inference data.

### ***Application to the classroom and the assignment work during the Summer Intensive***

The facilitator uses this concept in building skills to complete teacher study assignments and eventually developing low-inference teacher observation.

Low-inference classroom observations are detailed transcriptions of what took place. They are an accurate record of what the teacher actually said and did and what the students actually said and did – just the words.

### ***Debrief Tips***

Facilitator highlights that capturing low-inference data takes a lot of practice and school/classroom application which during the Summer Intensive is provided through Teacher Study assignments and during the Residency through the observation of actual teachers and students.

Have participants reflect on the *Meet the Staff* activity by asking the following questions:

- What data did you capture?
- What data did you miss?
- How did recording of what you see and hear help you understand the values and ideas of the school community?